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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0908
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 125635

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [EU](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST - WORKING WITH THE EU TO IMPROVE
BURMA SANCTIONS REGIME

¶11. (SBU) Action Request: The European Union is in the process of restructuring one of its target lists of Burmese names and entities that are subject to sanctions in the EU. The U.S. supports the EU's efforts to make its sanctions more effective. Experts from State, Justice, and Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Controls (OFAC) met with Commission officials in October and OFAC agreed to share suggestions on possible methods of improving the EU's Burma Sanctions regime. USEU is requested to share the OFAC paper with appropriate EU institutions and Brussels-based stakeholders. The OFAC paper may be downloaded from the classified Intranet at www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki by searching for "2008 OFAC Paper-EU Burma Sanctions". All other Action posts are requested to inform host governments of U.S. desire to maintain strong cooperation on Burma and our cooperative effort with the Commission, and may share the OFAC paper at their discretion. Posts should reach out to geographic and sanctions-specific authorities at Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Trade. If you have questions difficulties downloading the paper, please contact EUR/ERA Ben Rockwell, EEB/ESC/TFS John Marshall Klein, or EAP/MLS Laura Scheibe.

¶12. (SBU) Background: The European Union maintains a robust sanctions regime against Burma's military junta, including a travel ban on top officials, an arms embargo and a freeze on the junta's assets in Europe. In 2007, the EU expanded sanctions to include an embargo on imports of gemstones, timber and metal, and a wider visa ban. In the course of implementing these additional sanctions, the EU identified problems with the nature and composition of its targeted lists. The EU is now in the process of addressing these problems, and EU and Presidency officials have expressed openness to working with the U.S. to ensure the sanctions regime maintains its effectiveness. The EU's November 10 General Affairs Council adopted conclusions deplored Burma's lack of progress toward democracy and signaling willingness to "revise, amend, or reinforce" EU measures as warranted. The EU Council must reauthorize the existing sanctions program before it expires on April 30, 2009. EU External Relations Counselors will begin discussing a position in the coming days.

¶13. (SBU) Begin Talking Points for Demarche on EU Burma Sanctions:

-- We believe it is important to maintain a united, strong front on Burma. The regime continues to demonstrate its disregard for its people through increased arrests and by handing down long prison sentences. We believe it is

important to keep up the international pressure on the regime.

-- We regret that the Burmese have refused to deal constructively with the UN, including UN Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari. There has been talk of a visit to Burma by UN Secretary General Ban, something we feel should only happen if there are concrete achievements by the Government of Burma.

-- We understand that the EU is in the process of restructuring one of its target lists of Burmese names and entities subject to sanctions. We support the EU's efforts to make international sanctions against Burma more effective and would welcome the opportunity to work together towards that outcome. We are concerned, however, that the optics and political message of certain potential changes (for example, deleting entire target lists without other changes) could be interpreted as a weakening of the EU's stance on the Burmese regime.

-- As you undertake the complex and technical process of updating EU sanctions, we would like to provide some ideas for options. As follow-up to our meetings in recent months, we are providing an updated paper prepared by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) regarding possible technical changes to EU Burma measures.

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POINT FOR USEU

-- U.S. experts are prepared to address these issues further if you so wish. The U.S. Mission to the EU would be happy to facilitate a Digital Video Conference if you would find this beneficial.

END TALKING POINTS
RICE